

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Block Island School

January 10, 2011

7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, January 10, 2011, in the media center of the Block Island School. William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Elizabeth Connor, Patricia Doyle, Annie Hall, Sean McGarry, and William Padien. Robert Hicks was also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (Hall, Connor) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 13, 2010, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve the sealed minutes of the executive session meeting held on December 13, 2010, as written carried with a vote of 5-0.

Receive Study on Cogeneration

Chris Warfel presented his study on cogeneration to Mr. Hicks, explaining that, although it is outdated, he thought it would be valuable for the school to have. He stated that if the school would like to go in this direction the study would be helpful in getting started. The School Committee thanked Mr. Warfel for his time and effort and for submitting the study.

Reports

William Padien reported that the first negotiation session was held with the Town Employees' Association, but will update the committee during executive session.

Pat Doyle stated that she, along with the rest of the committee members, received an e-mail from Amy Doran regarding the problem with the boilers during Christmas vacation. She was very impressed with the level of service from Ms Doran, stating that the school is blessed to have someone of her caliber working here.

Annie Hall asked if there were any updates on graduation requirements. The Board of Regents will hold public hearings in January and February, with one scheduled for January 19 at South Kingstown High School. Mr. Hicks is in the process of drafting a response. He feels the BOR is going in the wrong direction if math scores on the state tests drive the type of diploma a student receives. All felt it was important to keep informed on how this is progressing.

Mr. Hicks submitted the NESDEC enrollment projections for 2010-11, explaining that this study is done yearly as a service of our membership in this organization, which supports New England school districts. Based on students already in the school, we expect to see a 20 percent enrollment drop over the coming decade. This will increase per pupil costs as our expenditures, which are essentially fixed with one teacher per grade or subject, are divided by fewer students. If the projections are maintained and we continue to lose students it will mean some very difficult discussions will have to be held.

Mr. Hicks submitted a memorandum on the new evaluation system that is being developed for statewide implementation, which will be phased in over the next few years. The first draft of the system will be rolled out soon. The six standards include establishing a common understanding or expectations for educator quality within the district; emphasizing the professional growth and continuous improvement of individual educators; creating an organizational approach to the collective professional growth and continuous improvement of groups of educators to support district goals; providing quality assurance for the performance of all district educators; assuring fair, accurate, and consistent evaluations; and providing district educators a role in guiding the ongoing system development in response to systematic feedback and changing district needs. The teaching framework is divided into four domains: planning and preparation; classroom instruction; classroom environment; and assessment, reflection, and improvement. Mr. Hicks gave examples of two rubrics, one from classroom environment dealing with classroom behavior and the other from an administrative rubric regarding collaboration. The plan is to implement the system next year with consequences the following year.

The standing of accounts as of December 31, 2010, was submitted for review. Mr. Hicks stated that the bottom line is slightly more positive by approximately \$19,000. We won't know for certain until April or May, but we may not have to access undesignated funds. The food service line is doing very well, which could be due to the commodity use through Aramark. When asked about the excess water charges and penalties, Mr. Hicks reported that the penalties were waived thanks to the letter sent by Mrs. Martin. A motion (Padien, Hall) to accept the fiscal report through December 31, 2011, carried with a vote 5-0.

Old Business

A motion (Padien, McGarry) to approve Policy HL: Publication of Materials as written carried with a vote of 5-0.

At December's meeting Mark Hawk was appointed Director of Special Education, but his salary remained at the interim rate of \$400 per day. Mr. Hicks recommended that his permanent wage be set at \$425 per day, effective immediately. It is a slight increase over the previous director's salary, but Mr. Hawk has been work at the lower rate since September. A motion (Padien, Doyle) to approve the increase in Mark Hawk's salary from \$400 to \$425 per day carried with a vote of 5-0.

New Business

A motion (Hall, Connor) to consent to the appointments of Virginia Collins and Jeffrey Foley as the food service helpers carried with a vote of 5-0. They will be compensated at the rate of \$12.50 per hour, but receive no employee health benefits.

A motion (Hall, Padien) to consent to the appointment of Victoria Carson, Kathleen Mello, and Martha Velie-Gass to the teacher leadership position of inclusion and co-teaching carried with a vote of 5-0. It was noted for the record that they will share the stipend and funds for professional development/materials.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to consent to the appointment of Sara Turenne as the assistant junior high girls' basketball coach carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Hall, Connor) to approve the extension of Judy Durden's maternity leave, returning to the classroom on February 28, 2011, carried with a vote of 5-0.

Sean McGarry requested a review of the traffic plan for the front driveway of the school. He has concerns about the drop off and pick up process, but especially with the afternoon pick up of students. There are only five or six spaces out front where parents can park and when this is full, parents are parking on the east side of High Street. At dismissal time students are taking the bus, walking home, or being picked up by parents. The front lobby becomes very chaotic and some children are uncertain about which mode of transportation they are to utilize or where their parents are if they are to be picked up. Mr. McGarry feels this creates a lot of safety problems and was hoping to address the drop off/pick up area. He suggested that perhaps those students taking the bus could be kept in the cafeteria until all are ready to board, making it a safer and more controlled environment. He also suggested that a crossing guard could be hired, but Elizabeth Connor stated that you cannot have a crosswalk to nowhere (no sidewalk on the east side of High Street). Mr. Hicks stated that if there is a significant problem the students taking the bus could be dismissed in the front while the students going home with parents could be dismissed out the back by the gym. However, this would create a greater supervision issue with both doors having to be covered. Having all the bus students waiting in the cafeteria also creates an additional need for supervision. Mr. Hicks reiterated that he feels the safest place for the bus is where it currently sits. If anyone has other suggestions, please submit them to the principals or the superintendent. Mr. McGarry requested that the discussion be continued at the next regular meeting.

Mr. Hicks submitted his proposed school budget for the 2011-2012 fiscal year, including a technology budget, a four-year capital plan, and the fund reserve projection. He also submitted a memorandum explaining revenues and expenditures with his focus this evening on revenues. While the local appropriation is capped at 4.25 percent, Mr. Hicks' budget has an increase of \$154,987 or 3.65 percent, for a total of \$4,398,487 (local appropriation). In state aid, the former governor proposed a 1.3 percent decrease and Mr. Hicks reduced that by an additional five percent, assuming the state fiscal crisis will prohibit the implementation of the new funding formula. Federal stimulus funds will not be available this year. When asked by Mr. McGarry how he would handle the town cutting our budget, which has no cushion, Mr. Hicks stated that he would have three more months of history to indicate where we may be over or under budget. He would check to see if the savings in the food service program are real, watch pension legislation very closely, perhaps work with Blue Cross to limit the percentage increase in health care, and see if there are other places in the budget that we could be a little more aggressive, such as not purchasing administrative computers this year. The only way he would support going below the auditor's recommended fund balance amount would be to have the town agree to cover any unexpected, significant problems. He cautioned that you must have a multi-year plan if you use the fund balance to balance the budget. At the next meeting Mr. Hicks will discuss the expenditure side of the budget, including special education, maintenance, and athletics.

Calendar of Events

A calendar of events for the months of January and February was submitted for School Committee information. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 24, 2011.

Correspondence

Various pieces of correspondence were forwarded for School Committee information, including letters from three school districts withdrawing from SORICO.

Executive Session

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 9:03 p.m. to go into executive session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-46-4, 5(a)2) for contract negotiations carried with a vote of 5-0.

Open Session

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 9:15 p.m. to return to open session carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to seal the minutes of the executive session carried with a vote of 5-0.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Connor) at 9:15 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: February 7, 2011